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Nasal Douching

If you suffer from a chronic nasal problem like allergy or sinusitis, if you use nasal steroid sprays on a long term basis or if you have had a recent nasal surgery, it helps to rinse your nose in order to free the nasal cavity from secretions and achieve a healthy nasal lining.

Nasal douching (also called nasal irrigation or nasal rinsing) is a process by which this is achieved.

To do so, you need to add a flat teaspoon of salt and a flat teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda to a pint of cooled down boiled water. In metric terms, a pint is approximately half a litre (roughly equal to two ordinary glasses).

The water should ideally be at body temperature (37 degrees Celsius) and the solution should have the correct balance of the ingredients to cause the least amount of irritation. It is difficult to get the solution exactly at body temperature therefore make sure it is not too hot or too cold.

There are different ways to rinse your nose. You may pour some of the solution into the cup of your hand and sniff but it is best if you used a rinsing bottle or a salt-water spray. The aim is to wash the whole nasal cavity so if you rinse properly you may feel the water at the back of your throat which you then need to spit out; or you may notice that the water runs out of the other nostril- this can especially happen if you rinse your nose with a rinsing bottle.

If you find making the solution tricky, you can obtain readymade products from your local pharmacy. There is a wide variety of products available in the market and you can buy them over the internet as well (eg www.amazon.co.uk).

The solutions come in different strengths and concentrations. For most nasal conditions, an isotonic solution (normal solution) would be sufficient.

NeilMed Sinus Rinse or Sterimar are two common salt-water solutions in the current market.

NeilMed comes in different forms but the squeeze bottle is the best for rinsing the nose after sinus surgery. NeilMed comes with readymade sachets. The bottle introduces a jet of water flow of which can be controlled by the patient.

Sterimar comes in canisters and produces the solution in the form of spray.

NeilMed bottles can be reused and you can buy the sachets separately.

Sterimar needs to be replaced when finished.

If you use these products to rinse your nose, make sure to tilt your head down as if you are looking to the floor; this will keep the nasal pathway in line with the flow of the solution.

